

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In a highly available environmental monitoring system, several slave devices are
5 associated with either a fast polling list or a slow polling list. The fast polling list is
polled by a master device more frequently than the slow polling list. A slave device is
associated with the fast polling list if the slave device responds to a poll from the master
device within a time period, and is associated with the slow polling list if the slave device
does not respond to the poll from the master device within the time period. Furthermore,
10 several control devices arbitrate to determine which shall be the master device for
controlling several serial buses. The master device periodically switches between the
plurality of serial buses to communicate with slave devices.